

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 IO-14 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /160 W

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R 311645Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5361

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMCONSUL BELEM

AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE

AMCONSUL SALVADOR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 6637

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GEISEL DEFLATES DECOMPRESSION OPTIMISTS

REF: A. BRASILIA 3722; B. BRASILIA A-116

SUMMARY: IN HIS FIRST MAJOR SPEECH DEVOTED TO INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PRESIDENT GEISEL ON AUGUST 29, WHILE REAFFIRMING HIS COMMITMENT TO DECOMPRESSION ACTED TO RESTRAIN THOSE ELEMENTS OF BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH HAVE ENGAGED IN ENTHUSIASTIC PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL RELAXATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE ASSERTED THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO RETAIN ITS EXCEPTIONAL SECURITY POWERS AND REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO "...THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT... WITH THE INDISPENSIBLE MINIMUM OF SECURITY." HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE NECESSITY FOR SECURITY MEASURES WOULD GRADUALLY DECREASE WITH INCREASING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT REMINDED HIS LISTENERS THAT THE PROCESS OF DECOMPRESSION WOULD BE "... SLOW, GRADUAL AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SURE..." AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ACCEPT PRESSURES

TO HASTEN THE PROCESS WHICH MIGHT CALL UP OPPOSING PRESSURES FROM THE RIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, DELIVERED TO LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARENA PARTY GATHERED IN BRASILIA, WAS GIVEN IN TWO DISTINCT PARTS. IN THE FIRST, THE PRESIDENT, SPEAKING AS POLITICAL CHIEF OF THE ARENA PARTY, REMINDED HIS LISTENERS THAT THE "CONSTRUCTION OF THE FUTURE GREATNESS (GRANDEZA)" OF BRAZIL MUST TAKE PLACE "NECESSARILY, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR DEMOCRATIC REGIME," WHOSE CHARACTERISTICS HE DEFINED AS "GENUINE ATTENTION TO THE MOST PRECIOUS ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL, LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATION OF THE POPULAR WILL, AND PERIODIC CHANGE OF THE EXECUTIVE." HE REJECTED THE IDEA OF A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM WITHIN BRAZIL, BUT ALSO CONDEMNED THE SYSTEM OF A SINGLE PARTY, "FRUIT OF AND FACTOR IN THE RESTRICTION OF POLITICAL LIBERTIES," WHICH ARE "ESSENTIAL TO THE NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIME." HE EXHORTED BOTH PARTIES TO BECOME "VITAL ELEMENTS IN THE FORMATION OF THE NATURAL WILL," THROUGH DEBATE AND OPENING OF THEIR RANKS TO "REINVI-GORATING YOUTH." THE FUNDAMENTAL STEPS TOWARD PERFECTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME, HE SAID, DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON THE PARTIES' ABILITY TO BRING ABOUT "AN EFFICIENT POLITICAL MOTIVATION OF THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE." THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DO ITS PART, HE PROMISED, TO ASSURE THAT ELECTIONS WERE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT "ABUSE OF POWER THAT GIVES RISE TO DEFRAUDING THE WILL OF THE POLLS."

2. PRESIDENT GEISEL EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN AN ARENA VICTORY IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS, "CERTAIN THAT THE ELECTORAL SUCCESS OF ARENA WILL REPRESENT POPULAR APPROVAL FOR THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION..." HE CALLED FOR UNITY WITHIN THE PARTY, THE SUBMERGENCE OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN FAVOR OF THE GOOD OF THE MAJORITY, AND DISCIPLINE IN FOLLOWING PARTY DIRECTIVES. HE HELD THAT DEMOCRACY CANNOT EVOLVE IN CONDITIONS OF REDUCED POPULAR PARTICIPATION, AND EXPRESSED "SINCERE DESIRE THAT THE NEXT ELECTIONS BE A STEP FORWARD IN THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION OF THE BRAZILIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND A MANIFESTATION OF INTENSE POPULAR PARTICIPATION."

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3. IN THE SECOND PORTION OF HIS ADDRESS, GEISEL, SPEAKING AS PRESIDENT, RESPONDED TO "VARIOUS PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH TEND TO DISTURB THE LIFE OF THE NATION." REFERRING TO "RECENT EXPRESSIONS, BY INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS ASSOCIATIONS AND ASSEMBLIES, CONCERNING BRAZILIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, WHICH WERE WIDELY PUBLICIZED AND COMMENTED ON IN THE PRESS," HE FELT THE NECESSITY OF "AN OFFICIAL CLARIFYING STATEMENT TO AVOID GRAVE MISUNDERSTANDINGS..." HE RECALLED HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE

ARENA CONVENTION IN SEPTEMBER, 1973 (BRASILIA 6049), IN WHICH HE STATED THAT THE REGIME "MUST NOT ABDICATE THE PREROGATIVES OR POWERS WHICH WERE CONFERRED ON THE GOVERNMENT WHILE THEY REMAIN ESSENTIAL TO THE REALIZATION OF THE CONCRETE AND SPECIFIC OBJECTS WHICH IT IS ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO PURSUE...", AND HIS SPEECH OF MARCH 19, 1974 (BRASILIA 1966), WHEN HE DESCRIBED HIS DESIRE TO SEE THESE POWERS "...NOT SO MUCH IN EXTENDED OR FREQUENT USE BUT RATHER AS A POTENTIAL FOR REPRESSIVE ACTION OR MORE ENERGETIC CONTAINMENT... UNTIL THEY ARE SUPERSEDED BY CREATIVE POLITICAL IMAGINATION..." IN THESE SPEECHES, HE CONTINUED, "I WAS REFERRING--AND I HOPE I HAVE GIVEN NO MARGIN FOR FALSE INTERPRETATIONS--TO THE MECHANISM OF THE INSTITUTIONAL AND COMPLEMENTARY ACTS IN EFFECT, THE SPECIAL LEGISLATION ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND OTHER POWERS CONFERRED BY THE REVOLUTION ON THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WITH HIS INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES. IN THIS MANNER THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMES, WITH INTEREST, DEBATE AND DISCUSSION OVER THE UNSETTLED QUESTIONS OF BRAZILIAN POLITICAL LIFE, WHICH FURNISH FOUNDATIONS AND SUBSTANCE TO THE TASK OF RENOVATION WHICH MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED... I DO NOT ACCEPT, HOWEVER, NOR COULD I EVER ACCEPT, UNDUE PRESSURES OR CAMPAIGNS FOR A RETURN TO THE PAST ON THE PART OF WHATEVER INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS, WHICH, UNDER VARIOUS PRETEXTS, EVEN HOLDING HIGH THE BANNER OF NOBLE IDEALS AND ETERNAL VALUES, INTEND TO FORCE INCONVENIENT, PREMATURE OR IMPRUDENT CHANGES AND REVISIONS IN THE NATIONAL POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. BEHIND THEM, ONE EASILY DISCERNS THE PERMANENT AND STERILE AGITATION OF KNOWN SUBVERSIVE MINORITIES DISPUTE, HOPE TO CREATE THE CLIMATE OF INTRAQUILITY AND DISORDER IN WHICH THEY DREAM OF PROSPERING."

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4. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT, HE CONTINUED, TO MAINTAIN CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL BRAZILIAN CAN SATISFY HIS AND HIS FAMILY'S NEEDS; NO ONE NEED FEAR WHO DOES NOT DEFY THE LAW OR ENGAGE IN SUBVERSION. IT IS ALSO A BASIC PREOCCUPATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, GEISEL SAID, TO PRESERVE PEACE AND STABILITY. "THE SECURITY AGENCIES WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE IN PERSERVERING COMBAT, RIGOROUS BUT WITHOUT CONDEMNABLE EXCESS, HARD BUT WITHOUT USELESS VIOLENCE, FOR IT IS THEIR DUTY TO ACT TO SAFEGUARD INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC ORDER." HE CONTINUED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT PERMIT BRAZIL TO RISK THE WAVES OF VIOLENCE THAT OCCUR IN OTHER NATIONS. "THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROCEED IN ITS MISSION OF PROMOTING... THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT-- ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ALSO POLITICAL--WITH MINIMUM INDISPENSIBLE SECURITY. AND IT DESIRES, STRIVING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR THIS, THAT THE NEED FOR SECURITY BECOME GRADUALLY REDUCED. THOSE WHO THINK THAT THEY CAN RUSH THIS PROCESS BY CALLING INTO PLAY MANIPULATED PRESSURES ON PUBLIC OPINION, AND, BY THAT MEANS, PRESSURE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT ERR-AND ERR GRAVELY, MOREOVER. THOSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESSURES WILL ONLY SERVE TO CREATE OPPOSING PRESSURES OF EQUAL OR GREATER INTENSITY, REVERSING THE PROCESS OF SLOW, GRADUAL AND SURE RELAXATION (DISTENCAO), WHICH WE SEEK, TO ARRIVE AT A CLIMATE OF GROWING POLARIZATION AND INTRANSIGENT RADICALIZATION, WITH APPEAL TO EMOTIONAL IRRATIONALITY AND DESTRUCTIVE VIOLENCE. AND THIS, I SUURE YOU, THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT PERMIT."

5. COMMENT: EVEN BEFORE PRESIDENT GEISEL TOOK OFFICE IN MARCH 1974, BRAZIL'S "POLITICAL CLASS" EXPERIENCED A CERTAIN DEGREE OF EUPHORIA BASED ON EXPECTATIONS THAT HE WOULD ADVANCE THE DAY OF "POLITICAL REOPENING" SO FIRMLY DERIVED DURING THE MEDICI REGIME. GEISEL HIMSELF INDEED CONTRIBUTED TO THAT ENTHUSIASM IN PART BY RECEIVING CALLS FROM POLITICIANS, DRAWING ON THE POLITICAL CLASS FOR HIS CABINET AND HIS GUBERNATORIAL DESIGNEES AND BY EVINCING AN INTEREST IN CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE, AS SET OUT IN REF A. ACTIONS INDICATING THE DESIRABILITY OF A VERY GRADUAL ADVANCE TOWARD POLITICAL NORMALITY, SUCH AS HIS CAREFULLY WORDED

MARCH 19 SPEECH AND THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGAL MOVE AGAINST MDB DEPUTY CHICO PINTO, DEFLATED THAT ENTHUSIASM ONLY TEMPORARILY. RATHER, AS SHOWN IN REF B, RECENT WEEKS HAVE SEEN, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE UPCOMING ELECTION, INCREASED PUBLIC SPECULATION AND THEORIZING BY PROMINENT POLITICIANS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT LEADERS SUCH AS PETRONIO PORTELLA, CELIO BORJA AND FLAVIO MARCILIO, AND ARENA CANDIDATES SUCH AS NESTOR JOST IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL AND JOAO CLEOPHAS IN PERNAMBUCO. THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF THIS RECENT DEBATE HAS BEEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE INCORPORATION INTO THE CONSTITUTION, WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE, OF SECURITY POWERS THAT WOULD RENDER UNNECESSARY THE RETENTION OF SUCH EXTRAORDINARY POWERS AS INSTITUTIONAL ACT 5, BUT DISCUSSIONS HAVE ALSO INCLUDED THE NOTION OF CREATION OF A COUNCIL OF STATE TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES, AND OTHER MEANS OF ESSENTIALLY LIMITING THE PRESIDENT'S RECOURSE TO ARBITRARY POWERS. A WARNING ISSUED UNOFFICIALLY TO THE COMPETING PARTIES IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL TO TONE DOWN THEIR LANGUAGE (REF B), APPARENTLY DID NOT HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT, AND THE STAGE WAS THUS SET FOR THE AUGUST 29 SPEECH. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT REAFFIRMED HIS COMMITMENT TO DECOMPRESSION THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE SPEECH, HIS FIRM INSISTENCE ON RETAINING THE EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POWERS AND HIS STERN WARNING--DIRECTED AT LEAST AS MUCH TO HIS OWN PARTY AS TO THE MDB--AGAINST MOBILIZING PUBLIC OPINION TO PRESS THE GOVERNMENT FOR "IMPRUDENT OR PREMATURE CHANGE" IN BRAZIL'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE. NO DOUBT THERE WILL STILL BE SOME POLITICIANS WHO WILL PROFESS TO SEE NO RESTRAINT ON THEIR ACTIVITIES IMPLICIT IN THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS. FOR THE GREAT MAJORITY, HOWEVER, THE MESSAGE SHOULD BE CLEAR; THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF THE PARTIES, BOTH ARENA AND MDB, TO SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION, AND TO AVOID DIVISIVE DEBATE, WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION, ARMED SO LONG AS NECESSARY WITH THE SECURITY POWERS IT NEEDS TO CARRY OUT ITS ROLE, SPURS THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL, AT SOME FUTURE TIME, CREATE THE CONDITIONS PERMITTING THE MORE NORMAL STRUCTURING OF THE SECURITY POWERS AND A RETURN TO MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. IN SPITE OF THE POLITICAL RESTRAINT IT DEMANDED, THE SPEECH DID GIVE EVIDENCE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL SINCERITY WITH WHICH THIS GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE GRAPPLING WITH THE PRICKLY PROBLEM OF CREATING A "POLITICAL REOPENING." THE FEAR OF A RIGHTIST BACKLASH--AND THE WARNING AGAINST THOSE WHO MIGHT BE THINKING ALONG THOSE LINES--COMES THROUGH CLEARLY IN THE LAST LINES OF THE SPEECH AND IS ONE REASON FOR THE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS MANNER IN WHICH THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT HAS ACTED IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL AFFAIRS. GEISEL APPRAISAL OF THE PROSPECTS FOR THE RETURN OF REPRESENTATIVE POLITICS TO BRAZIL WAS COLD, SOBER, AND PRAGMATIC--ADJECTIVES ALREADY APPLIED TO HIM IN OTHER CONTEXTS. IT WILL DISAPPOINT

MANY WHO LOOKED FOR RAPID PROGRESS, BUT IT WAS AN HONEST AND
REALISTIC STATEMENT OF THE LIMITATIONS INHERENT IN THE DELICATE
PROCESS, AND NOT WITHOUT PROMISE AS A CONTINUATION OF THE
DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND THE POLITICAL CLASS.
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Errors: N/A
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From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974081/aaaaaatg.tel
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